



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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September 21, 2004

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TOM COCHRAN

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The Honorable James Oberstar
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The Honorable James M. Inhofe
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U.S. Senate
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The Honorable James M. Jeffords
Ranking Member
Environment and Public Works
Committee
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Conferees:

In August, The United States Conference of Mayors met in Chicago, Illinois for a special leadership meeting to release its updated 4-point policy agenda for keeping America Strong: Mayors '04 Metro Agenda for America's Cities.

A major cornerstone of that agenda is transportation investment of no less than \$318 billion over six years for the reauthorization of the nation's surface transportation law (TEA-21) to build a 21st Century Transportation system with modern transit, bridges, large-scale transportation infrastructure projects, and metro highway systems with new technologies that link major metro areas, cut the time people spend in traffic, create more jobs, and move goods and services more productively.

Should Congress determine an extension is necessary to meet an investment of \$318 billion over six-years, the nation's mayors urge the adoption of a simple extension of no less than six months avoiding disruption to the transportation program occurring under short-term extensions.

Maintaining the Conference's support for a \$318 billion transportation bill requires continued balanced transportation investment in our metropolitan areas including:

Public Transportation Investment

- Recognizing that public transportation reduces congestion, the nation's mayors urge no less than \$56.5 billion for public transportation to stimulate a dramatic expansion of high-capacity public transit systems, including light rail, heavy rail, commuter rail, and bus service.
- Funding for the transit program from the general fund and the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund should be guaranteed and we support maintaining current federal-local matching shares for the transit program as authorized under ISTEA and TEA-21.
Oppose efforts to increase funding for the highway program by reducing funding for the transit program by maintaining the 20% transit - 80% highway share.
- Support the historical funding allocation of 40% for rail modernization, 40% for the new starts program and 20% for the bus and bus facilities program as included in H.R. 3550.
- Recognizing that cities throughout the United States are embracing less expensive, fixed guideway transit projects like streetcars, trolleys and bus rapid transit, we support the establishment of a new Small Starts Program with modified Federal rules to expedite these projects.

Metropolitan Infrastructure Investment

Acknowledging that 32 percent of our major roads are in poor condition and 29 percent of the nation's bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, we urge you to fund the core highway programs at no less than the \$261.5 billion identified in the Senate bill.

- Recognizing that it is difficult for localities and states to dedicate adequate resources to build, rebuild, or repair large-scale infrastructure projects addressing freight and goods movement, safety, and aging and congested transportation infrastructure, we urge no less than \$6.6 billion for "Projects of National and Regional Significance."

Environmental Investment

- The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ) should be funded at the Senate's \$13.4 billion level in response to the growing number of non-attainment areas designated under the 8-hour ozone and fine particulate matter standards.
- Oppose efforts designed to divert CMAQ funds to other purposes, undermining commitments to metropolitan areas to fund the clean air mandate.
Recognizing that metropolitan areas are struggling with the contamination of drinking water and the cleanup of streams, rivers, lakes and ponds from stormwater discharge, including oil, grease, lead and mercury, the nation's mayors support the establishment of a Highway Stormwater Discharge Mitigation Program as designed in S.1072.

Safety and Increased Public Investment

- Recognizing that safe routes for bicycles, walking and other non-motorized transportation choices are still inadequate in many metropolitan areas, the nation's mayors support the Safe Routes to School program as designed and funded H.R. 3550 and also support maximum funding for Transportation Enhancements.
- We urge you to support the metropolitan planning fund provision in the Senate bill that would increase the takedown for metropolitan areas from 1 percent to 1.5 percent. We believe this adjustment will enhance clean air efforts, increase public involvement and will improve congestion relief efforts.

Oppose Transportation Technology Innovation and Demonstration Program Provision That Preempts Local and State Rights-Of-Way Authority

- We urge you to oppose the Transportation Technology Innovation and Demonstration Program provision in S.1072 (Section 2105 (a)(5)) and H.R. 3550 (Section 5205 (g)(4)) that preempts a local or state government from enforcing its rights-of-way management rules on companies seeking to provide Intelligent Vehicle Highway Systems.
- We urge you to respect the unimpeded right of local government as owners/trustees of the rights-of-way to manage their rights-of-way and to receive compensation, including collection of all costs, including recovery of reasonable rent, for the rights-of-way by companies seeking access to the rights-of-way to provide Intelligent Vehicle Highway Systems.

Transportation is a top priority for America's mayors. Transportation is an economic stimulus. It creates jobs and helps ensure that metropolitan economies thrive and in turn the nation's economy.

The United States Conference of Mayors would be pleased to supply additional information to further your assessment of these issues before the conference committee. With strong backing from mayors across the nation on these issues, we stand ready to work with you on the reauthorization of TEA-21.

Sincerely,



Tom Cochran
Executive Director